Key Points

MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT

Section I - Municipal Solid Waste Overview

- The municipal solid waste system in Connecticut is complex and varied.
- Connecticut disposes of MSW predominately at resources recovery facilities.
- Though there has been a small reduction due to the economy, the amount of waste generated in Connecticut has trended upward, even after accounting for any increases in population.
- Stagnant recycling rates have not surpassed the pace of waste generation.
- In-state MSW disposal capacity has almost decreased to the fixed yearly capacity of the in-state RRFs.
- In-state MSW disposal capacity shortfall has led to increasing use of out-of-state disposal options - usually landfills.

Section II - Solid Waste Management Participants, Planning, and System Components

- Responsibility for waste management rests primarily with state and local governments and the quasi-public sector, but the federal government and the private sector play important roles.
- The state DEP role is primarily planning and regulating; local governments, quasi-public authorities, and the private sector are implementers.
- DEP recently updated the statutorily-required State Solid Waste Management Plan with the assistance of extensive stakeholder input.
- The statewide plan for managing waste must be consistent with statutorily preferred management methods that emphasize waste reduction and recycling over waste incineration and landfilling.
- Any action by a person, municipality or regional authority dealing with solid waste management is supposed to be consistent with the solid waste plan.
- Since the mid-1980s, solid waste planning requirements for municipalities and regional authorities have been eliminated.
- Because of projected increases in waste generation and the fixed capacity of current in-state disposal options, the State Solid Waste Management Plan calls for nearly doubling

the current waste diversion rate of MSW by 2024.

- Waste management strategies are implemented within a very complex waste management system that includes a number of functions: waste generation and separation; collection; transfer; transportation; transformation; and disposal.

Section III - Solid Waste Collection and Transfer Stations

- Choices made by municipalities over the level of control they wish to exercise and their amount of participation in solid waste collection impacts statewide outcomes for generation, diversion, and disposal of waste.

- Absent any contractual agreements or enforceable municipal ordinances, haulers can exercise tremendous discretion over how and where MSW is disposed.

- Illegal anti-competitive practices by haulers have been uncovered recently in Connecticut, but various legislative proposals to address this issue have failed.

- Transfer stations provide a link between collection and disposal of waste and processing of recyclables that can provide flexibility to local governments and the private sector in selecting disposal and recycling options.

Section IV - Recycling

- The recycling system is based on both mandatory and voluntary participation with incentives provided for various participants including individuals, local governments, and collectors.

- Most of the effort of government entities to encourage recycling are concentrated on residential waste.

- There is considerable variation in the range of items that can be recycled on a town-by-town basis and in the costs for recycling.

- Paper products and yard waste are the primary materials recycled in Connecticut.

- There is a well developed infrastructure for most of the items mandated for recycling that has helped the state reach its current recycling rate.

- There is little infrastructure for non-mandatory items that will need to be addressed, such as institutional and commercial organics, to meet future recycling goals.

- Per capita disposal rates are gaining favor as more appropriate and accurate measures of waste handling goals than recycling rates.

Key Points

Section V - Resources Recovery

- RRFs are waste disposal facilities that are able to reclaim energy as a byproduct of the incineration process.
- Connecticut relies on RRFs more than any other state.
- RRFs are capital-intensive facilities that rely on steady streams of waste for both fuel and revenue.
- Circumstances have changed since the six current RRFs were built and some of these changes make the construction of new facilities less feasible.
- The existing RRFs differ from each other in many critical ways.
- Important aspects of the waste disposal market, including ownership of RRFs and availability of disposal alternatives, are affected by the expiration of long-term municipal obligations.
- Revenues for a RRF are tied to disposal prices and the sale of energy.
- RRFs are monitored for air and water quality issues.
- Though MSW deliveries at RRFs are supposed to be monitored for recyclable content, little is done to keep recyclables from being burned.

Section VI - Landfills

- The rules and regulations surrounding the minimum health and safety requirements for landfills have grown more stringent over time at both the federal and state level.
- The minimum requirements for landfills in Connecticut exceed the federally accepted minimums.
- Burying MSW at landfills is the least expensive of current disposal options.
- The number of landfills in Connecticut has decreased steadily over the last 40 years.
- Resources recovery, though a more preferred method on the hierarchy than landfills, has a landfill component.
- Some states, though not Connecticut, currently allow the beneficial reuse of ash residue.